

CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 12, 1989

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
President
The Rockefeller University
1230 York Avenue
New York, New York 10021

Dear Josh:

I am sorry that I have no specific candidates to suggest for the several searches underway at the Rockefeller.

I admit to being somewhat puzzled about your letter and how to respond. In the middle paragraph on page 7, you describe current searches for senior faculty. At the start of the next paragraph, you refer to tenured appointments. I assumed that the senior faculty appointments were also tenured. But then the confusion set in. After starting to talk about tenured appointments in the bottom paragraph, you reverted to the term senior faculty positions. And the second sentence, "I will mention another current concern" seemed to set these apart. Was I meant to read that the exceptional women scientists you describe are not to be tenured? This ambiguity is deepened by the juxtaposition of the sentence starting "We are eager..." and the one starting "I am strongly committed". To be quite straightforward, the juxtaposition of those two sentences is exactly the kind of "clue" that suggests to people that you:

1. do not expect to find female candidates who meet your standards and
2. may apply criteria other than scientific excellence in such choices.

Altogether, I did not find the letter encouraging.

In my experience, one searches for female candidates the same way one searches for male candidates. After figuring out the fields you are interested in, you make every effort to find out who is doing the most exciting work. At present, such an effort is very likely to turn up women as well as men, particularly among younger people. The standard letters asking for suggestions, usually asking first about good candidates

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rather than who is doing the best work, are, I believe, much less likely to turn up women because most men simply don't think about women when asked to propose candidates for senior jobs.

I hope this is helpful. I'd be glad to talk to you about the issues I've raised if you wish.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Maxine F. Singer

MFS/MJ